

What is claimed is:

- 1        1. A method of routing an emergency request message from an Internet  
2        device to an emergency call answering center comprising the steps of:  
3                a) transmitting an IP formatted emergency request message to a  
4                network supporting Internet Protocol;  
5                b) determining the physical location of the Internet device from the IP  
6                address associated with the IP formatted emergency request message;  
7                c) converting the IP formatted emergency request message to a  
8                format compatible with the emergency call answering center; and  
9                d) routing the converted message and the physical location of the  
10              Internet device to the emergency-call-answering center.
  
- 1        2. The method of Claim 1 wherein step of converting the IP formatted  
2        emergency request message involves converting the IP address to a  
3        telephone number.
  
- 1        3. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of routing the converted  
2        message includes routing to an emergency response station within the  
3        service zone of said Internet device.
  
- 1        4. The method of Claim 3 further comprising the step of dispatching  
2        emergency personnel to assist a user of said Internet device at said  
3        physical location.

- 1       5. The method of Claim 1 wherein said Internet device is a client terminal
- 2       in a Local Area Network (LAN).
  
- 1       6. The method of claim 5 wherein the IP address of said client terminal is
- 2       assigned dynamically when a user of said Internet device attempts to login
- 3       to said network supporting Internet Protocol.
  
- 1       7. The method of Claim 1 wherein further including the step of routing said
- 2       message to a Public Service Access Point (PSAP) within the service zone
- 3       of a user of said Internet device.
  
- 1       8. The method of Claim 1 wherein said step of determining the physical
- 2       location of the Internet device is performed by querying a database of
- 3       Internet user records.

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1           9. Within a network capable of routing Internet Protocol (IP) messages to  
2           an emergency call answering center, the network containing at least one  
3           database storing a plurality of Internet user records, a method of converting  
4           IP formatted emergency request messages to a protocol compatible with  
5           the emergency call answering centers comprising the steps of:  
6               a) detecting an IP formatted emergency message transmitted by an  
7           Internet device;  
8               b) using the IP address of the message to query said database;  
9               c) returning corresponding physical location associated with the IP  
10           address of the message;  
11               d) returning the format type associated with said emergency call  
12           answering center; and  
13               e) using the format type to convert the IP formatted emergency  
14           message into a format compatible with said emergency call answering  
15           center.

1       10. A communications system for delivering emergency messages placed  
2       through the Internet to a telephonic emergency-call-answering center, said  
3       system comprising:

4               a central office;

5               an Internet Protocol (IP) network accessible by Internet users  
6       through said central office and containing an entry gateway configured to  
7       detect IP formatted messages containing requests for emergency services;  
8       and

9               an emergency call handling function linked to said entry gateway and  
10      configured to receive said IP formatted messages and deliver them to said  
11      telephonic emergency-call-answering center after converting them into a  
12      compatible format.

1       11. The communications system of Claim 10 wherein said emergency call  
2       handling function includes a database of Internet user translation records.

1       12. The communications system of Claim 11 wherein said translation  
2       records include physical location information associated with IP addresses.

1       13. The communications system of Claim 11 wherein said physical  
2       location information includes a PSTN telephone number.

1       14. The communications of Claim 10 further comprising an Internet device  
2       communicably coupled to said central office and containing the  
3       communications facilities for originating an emergency request message in  
4       an IP format.

1       15. The communications of Claim 14 wherein said Internet device is a  
2       client terminal in a Local Area Network (LAN).

1       16. The system of Claim 10 wherein said entry gateway is an Internet  
2       through an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

1       17. The communication system of Claim 10 further comprising an exit  
2       gateway providing a routing function between emergency call handling  
3       function and the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

1       18. The system of Claim 17 wherein said emergency call handling function  
2       is configured to access a traditional telephone based emergency call center  
3       through said PSTN.

1       19. The system of Claim 17 wherein said emergency call handling function  
2       is configured to access a Public Service Access Point through said PSTN  
3       when it receives a request for emergency services through said entry  
4       gateway.

1       20. The system according to claim 10 wherein said emergency call  
2       handling function is a separate element outside the IP network maintained  
3       by a third party administrator.